

# FROM BREAK IN TO BREAKTHROUGH

**Cody Christian, a young single adult in the Renewed Life Bible Study at The Loop Campus, shares how an unfortunate event was a turning point in his generosity during MISSION 1:8.**

I was hesitant to be obedient to God when it came to tithing. I gave regularly what I thought was a decent amount to my previous church, but not a tithe. MISSION 1:8 started about a month after I started going to Houston's First and I began thinking it was time for me to get closer to tithing.

Pastor Gregg's illustration of a ladder with each rung representing a level of giving spoke to my heart. I was pondering/praying/studying on the subject after church one Sunday, trying to understand what exactly God expected of me.

Then, I woke up the next day and found that my truck had been broken into.

The wretched thieves had broken the window out and stolen my radio, tools, and rifle! Due to the timing of the break in, I took it as a message from God: "I can either give you more of what I have given you, or I can take away what you have. It all comes from Me. Keep your trust in Me and do not fear or worry. Love Me, not money."

With this new perspective, I decided that I had to just let go and trust God. I prayed about the amount, and told Him that I was giving in obedience to His word, love for Him and His Kingdom, and with faith in His promises to take care of my needs.

A few months later, I received a promotion with a raise and I have been doing much better financially ever since, never feeling like I'm in a hole the way I used to. He keeps the Devourer away.

Initially, I felt justified and right in "tithing" on my net income, but was soon convinced that with all He has done for me, tithing on my gross income is the least I could do. I've since gone beyond tithing.

The Lord has been faithful to his word, making sure my needs are met, and then He tops it off with extra blessings. The lesson: God is faithful, powerful, and He really likes it when we demonstrate faith in Him — putting your money where your mouth is.

Ladder source: *Maximize* by Nelson Searcy, p. 204, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI (2010)



## NEWS + UPDATES

Houston's First Baptist Church is a relevant, biblical community where we **gather our hearts**, **grow our souls** and **give our lives** as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

**TWEET OF THE WEEK:** "Just had a friend confess that God used a @GreggMatte sermon to convict him on the significance of commitment. Man, God is too good!" — Gilbert Garza, @gilbertg12

### ALL CAMPUSES

#### HighPoint Bible Study

**Wed, Feb 4 @ 11:30a — Wells Fargo Plaza**

While our Downtown Campus at 1010 Lamar undergoes repairs, gather for one last week at the Wells Fargo Plaza (1000 Louisiana, ground floor auditorium). Bring your own lunch! Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/HighPoint](http://HoustonsFirst.org/HighPoint) for updates on the progress and to find previous messages.

**CONTACT** [Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Diane.Bagby@HoustonsFirst.org)

#### Car Care Ministry

**Sat, Feb 7 @ 9a-2p — The Auto Doc (1208 Montrose Blvd)**

The Car Care Ministry serves single women in our church by providing automobile service and minor repairs. This session will take place at The Auto Doc, owned by Houston's First members David & Denise Skorka.

**CONTACT** [Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org)

#### Together for Them Conference

**Feb 27-28 — The Loop (Worship Center)**

Anybody involved in adoption or foster care — parents, families, professionals, teachers, etc. — is invited to find resources, hear from experts, connect with others, and get equipped for your role. Special workshop begins on Friday with breakout sessions on Saturday. Get details and register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).

**CONTACT** [Toni.Steere@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Toni.Steere@HoustonsFirst.org)

#### The Mingling of Souls

**Fri, Apr 17 @ 7p — The Loop (Worship Center)**

At this live event, author and pastor Matt Chandler will explore God's design for love, marriage, sex, and redemption. Chandler offers an eternal, counter-intuitive perspective from the biblical book, Song of Solomon. The event is for single and married adults, regardless of age or stage of life. \$20 per person thru Mar 26. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).

**CONTACT** [Kristin.Hawkinson@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Kristin.Hawkinson@HoustonsFirst.org)

### WOMEN

#### From Good to Grace

**Tue, Mar 3 @ 6:30-8p — Fellowship Ctr**

What if there were another way to live where the responsibility for our spiritual growth rested on someone else? Christine Hoover, author of *From Good to Grace: Letting Go of the Goodness Gospel*, will illustrate how we confuse being good and trying hard — the "goodness gospel" — with the true gospel. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).

**CONTACT** [Haylee.Nelson@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Haylee.Nelson@HoustonsFirst.org)

### MEN

#### Men: Serve

**Sat, Feb 28 @ 8a-1p — The Loop**

Men will go out in teams to serve the widows of our church family through yard work, home repairs, and other projects. Advance registration is required, so sign up to serve by Feb 20 at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).

**CONTACT** [Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Emily.Brown@HoustonsFirst.org)

### THE LOOP

#### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

##### Phase 2 Birthday Bash

**Sun, Feb 8 @ 12-3p — The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)**

The HUB Student Ministry Girls are honoring the widows of our church with a Birthday Bash with lunch, cake, and worship. Girls in Grades 6-12 — come serve and celebrate with us! (If you are a widow and would like to be our guest, RSVP to [Sherry.Oradat@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Sherry.Oradat@HoustonsFirst.org).)

**CONTACT** [Susan.Newman@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Susan.Newman@HoustonsFirst.org)

#### MARRIED YOUNG ADULTS

##### Re|Create Date Night

**Fri, Feb 27 @ 6-10p**

Enjoy a night out with your spouse! We'll provide "date kits" for download at [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) to help you be intentional about the time you spend together. Childcare registration at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events).

**CONTACT** [Melanie.Russell@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Melanie.Russell@HoustonsFirst.org)

### CYPRESS

#### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

##### SURGE Super Bowl Party

**Today @ 5-9p — Cypress Ministry Center**

Students in 6th-12th grades, come watch the game, eat snacks, and play a halftime game of our own. Students can also participate in a chili cook-off for the chance to win a \$100 gift card!

**CONTACT** [Kaylyn.Sinclair@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Kaylyn.Sinclair@HoustonsFirst.org)

### DOWNTOWN

#### WOMEN

##### Women's Bible Study

**Every Mon, Feb 2-23 @ 7-8:30p — Terri Mueller's Home**

Join the ladies of the Downtown Campus in studying the "Fruit of the Holy Spirit," a four-week study based on Galatians 5:22-23. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown).

**CONTACT** [Carly.OConnor@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Carly.OConnor@HoustonsFirst.org)

### MEN

##### Men's Retreat: Roles of a Man

**Feb 27-28 — Hunt Retreat**

Men will explore what God's Word says about manhood, and leave with a clearer understanding of the expectations and responsibilities God places on men in today's society. Limited spots available. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Downtown) by Feb 25 for \$59. Walk-in registration: \$69.

**CONTACT** [Peter.Lee@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Peter.Lee@HoustonsFirst.org)

### SIENNA

#### NEXTGEN MINISTRIES

##### HUB Super Bowl Party

**Today @ 5p — Worship Center**

Students in 6th-12th grades, invite your friends and come watch the big game on the big screen! We'll have games and food, plus door prizes at halftime! Giveaways will go to those who register in advance at [HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna).

**CONTACT** [Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Jordan.Floro@HoustonsFirst.org)

#### Father-Daughter Sock Hop

**Fri, Feb 6 @ 6-8p — Worship Center**

Calling all dads, grandpas, and uncles! Invite your little lady and get ready for a night of fun at the hop! You and your special girl will enjoy dinner as you dance the night away. The Sock Hop is open to girls of all ages, and '50s attire is encouraged! Tickets are \$8 per person with a \$20 maximum per family. Register at [HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Sienna).

**CONTACT** [Katie.Walker@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Katie.Walker@HoustonsFirst.org)

### MAKE IT YOUR CHURCH ORIENTATION

**Sun, Feb 22 — The Loop, Downtown, Sienna**

Discover what it means to be a member of Houston's First! Over lunch, pastors and staff members from your campus will share the vision, mission, and strategy — and you can learn how to find your place to gather, grow, and give. The class is not required to join the church, but we encourage you to attend! RSVP for your campus at [HoustonsFirst.org/Events](http://HoustonsFirst.org/Events). (Cypress session coming in April!)



#### EAST ASIA MISSION TRIP INFORMATIONAL MEETING

**Sun, Feb 15 @ 12:30-2p — The Loop (Rm 252)**

Learn about Houston's First's upcoming trip to East Asia this Apr 23-May 3. Lunch is provided, so RSVP to [Ameer.Omar@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Ameer.Omar@HoustonsFirst.org).

### LIFE BIBLE STUDIES

Life Bible Studies are the primary method for connecting with others and growing together at Houston's First. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org](http://HoustonsFirst.org) to find one that's right for you, or ask the Welcome Team at your campus for assistance.



#### Wednesday evenings — The Loop

There's more to Houston's First than Sundays! Gather at The Loop on Wednesday evenings for MidLink featuring MidLink Cafe, Milestones classes, worship rehearsals, NextGen programs, and more. Visit [HoustonsFirst.org/MidLink](http://HoustonsFirst.org/MidLink) for the full schedule.

### SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

#### The Loop Campus

7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024

Worship 9:15a-11a-5p

Life Bible Studies 8a-9:15a-10:45a-6:30p

#### Cypress Campus

10300 Warner Smith Blvd • Cypress, TX 77433

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

#### Downtown Campus

1300 Lamar St • Houston, TX 77002

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

#### Sienna Campus

4309 Sienna Pkwy • Missouri City, TX 77459

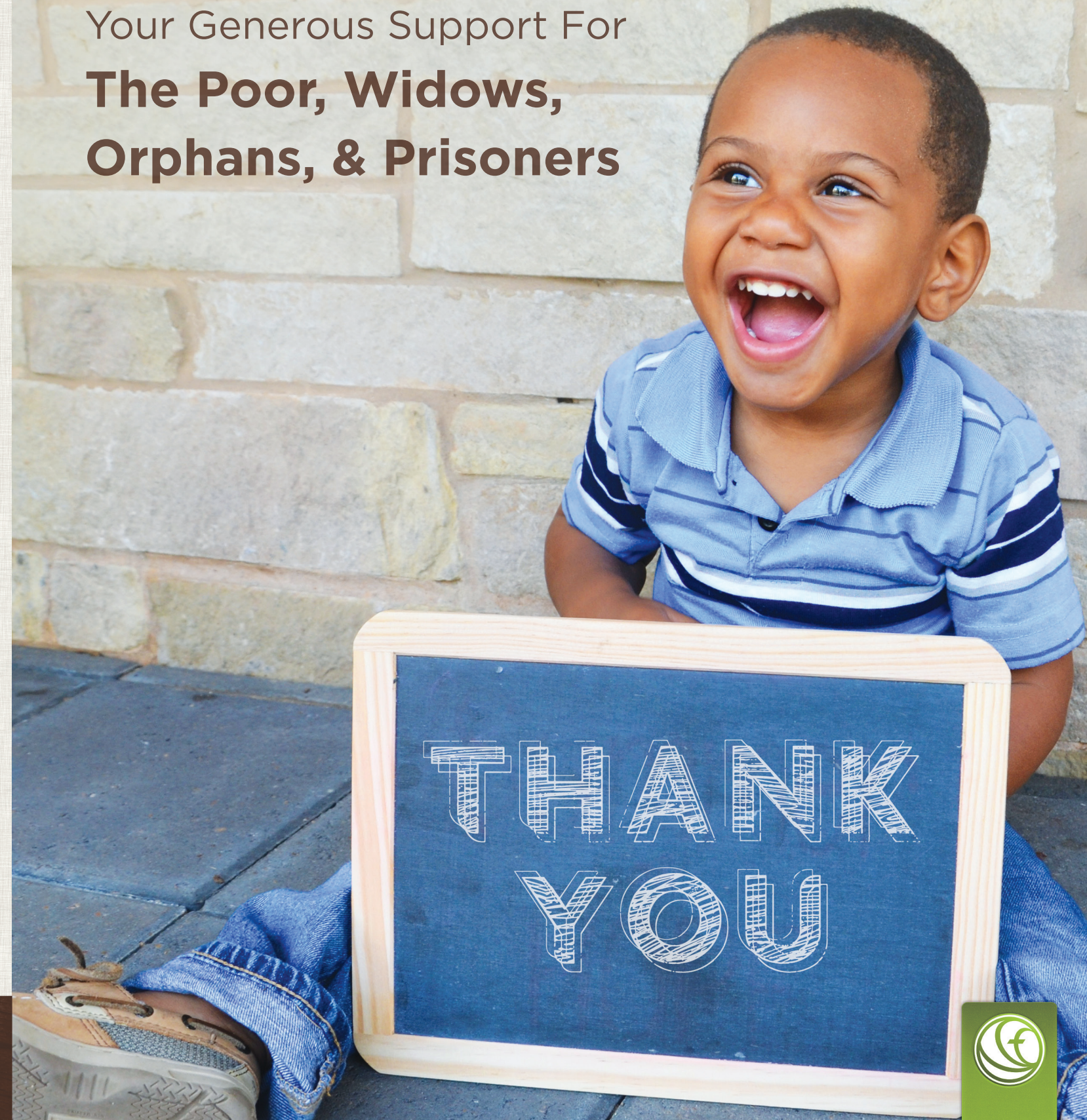
Worship 9:30a-11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a-11a

# MISSION 1:8

Feb 1, 2015

Your Generous Support For  
**The Poor, Widows,  
Orphans, & Prisoners**





# WHERE WE'VE BEEN

In March 2013, Houston's First began a two-year journey that combined two passions of our church — missions and spiritual growth. Called MISSION 1:8, the initiative sought to expand the financial generosity of our church family. In the process — as we each grew in the spiritual discipline of giving — we would support the church's current ministry and multiply our missional endeavors in our city, our nation, and our world, and among the poor, widows, orphans, and prisoners.

The goal was to receive \$60,000,000 over the two years, providing \$45,000,000 for operating expenses and **\$15,000,000 for the new missional endeavors**. Of that additional amount, **\$1,500,000** — or 10% — was earmarked for ministries serving the poor, widows, orphans, and prisoners.

## BUT GOD DID MORE THAN WE COULD ASK OR IMAGINE!

Thanks to the generosity of the Houston's First family, we are on track to receive **\$75,000,000** through the MISSION 1:8 initiative — providing an additional \$15,000,000 for missional endeavors beyond the original \$15,000,000 goal! As a result, we are able to **give away \$3,000,000** to the ministries serving these special groups of people.

We asked some of these recipients of MISSION 1:8 donations to share how these funds impacted the work they do. As you read their words, know that it was all possible because of your generosity!

## OTHER MINISTRIES SUPPORTED BY YOUR MISSION 1:8 GIVING

### IN OUR CITY

Cornerstone Family Ministries  
Houston Pregnancy Help Center  
Lifesong for Orphans  
Mission:Dignity  
Montrose Street Reach  
Open Door Mission  
The Forge for Families  
The Source for Women  
Youth Reach

### AROUND OUR WORLD

As Our Own (India)  
Back2Back Ministries (Mexico)  
Eagles Nest (East Asia)  
Empowered to Connect (various countries)  
Every Village (South Sudan)  
Family Legacy Missions International  
His Voice Global (South Sudan)  
Living Water International (various countries)  
Maasai Tribe (Kenya)

Mike Eden Ministries (Kenya)  
Northrise University (Zambia)  
Romanian Christian Enterprises  
The Harbor (Russia)

## \$2,107,636

Total giving to Poor, Widows,  
Orphans, & Prisoners  
(Mar 2013-Jan 2015)

An additional \$900,000 will be given away,  
bringing the total to more than \$3,000,000



"**AsoCriGui (Association of Christian Orphanages of Guatemala)** can continue with our goal to support homes with the distribution of food, medical and school supplies ... and we can also continue being the voice that can be an influence in the political system that relate to the children's protection."  
**Kendon Wheeler, President of Board of Directors**



"**Free Indeed Ministries** were able to reach over 360 inmates with the gospel by bringing the Freedom Weekend three-day retreat to three local prisons, walking them through repentance, healing and deliverance from bondages and engaging them in vital long-term discipleship relationships. We were also able to expand our mentoring mission to 19 inner-city boys returning from Harris County Juvenile Detention."

**Johnny D. Gentry, III, Lead Pastor**



"**LifeHouse of Houston** was able to accomplish our God-sized goal of protecting the life of 36 unborn children by providing housing, help, and hope to mothers in an unplanned pregnancy."  
**Meredith Phillips, Director of Marketing & Development**



"**Star of Hope Mission** was able to feed, clothe and minister to 1,200 homeless men, women and children daily; Provide spiritual skills classes, to ground each man, woman and family in the Word of God and Christ-centered living; give eight former homeless high school graduates a safe haven where they could study and prepare for the colleges where they are all now enrolled; serve 45,000 meals in December alone; lead over 7400 people in making first-time decisions and rededications for Christ."

**Brenda Wense, Donor Relations**



"**Hope for Youth** was able to send over 75 youth to Kids Across America (KAA) and Stoney Creek Ranch camps during the summer. This year we ministered to almost 300 youth, including 100 at Jesus 'N the Hood, our annual summer Youth Christian Leadership program. Your generosity continues to help us achieve our desired outcome of increases in high school graduation rates, college attendance, church attendance, and ultimately spiritual maturity in Christ."  
**Moriah Hollander, Donor Relations Manager**



"**WorkFaith Connection** helped more than 1,300 individuals with their job search and their journey toward life stability. Many of these men and women have previously been in prison and all are striving to live the life God planned for them!"

**Sandy Schultz, President/CEO**



"**Houston Habitat for Humanity** was able to build two homes — one in 2013 with Demetris Brown, and one in 2014 with Hattie Mitchell. The transformation in the lives of our family partners have been nothing short of miraculous. The children have benefited the most, and for that we are thankful!"

**Jerry Kovaly, Corporate Relations Manager**



"**Into Abba's Arms** was able to bless our children and community by providing VBS programs as well as ongoing project support for various needs around our site. We are so thankful for you and look forward to many more years of working together bega kwa bega (shoulder to shoulder) as together we serve the 'least of these.'"

**Jane Gravis, Founder**

# THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE HOUSTON'S FIRST FAMILY THROUGH MISSION 1:8...



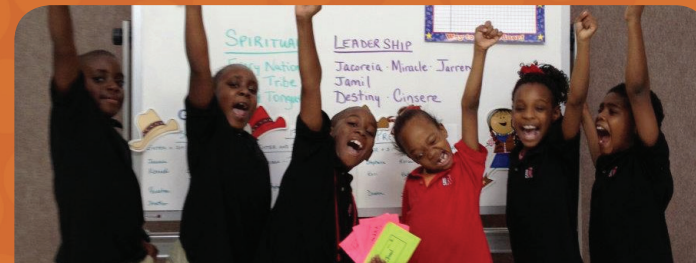
"**Southwestern Seminary at the Darrington Unit** has been able to further the biblical education of our 148 students who are pursuing Bachelor of Arts Degrees in Biblical Studies, helping to purchase textbooks, school supplies, and books for our +10,000 volume collegiate theological library. These prisoner-students are leading evangelistic and discipleship-oriented Bible studies on every wing of the prison, doing cell-to-cell "tierwalking" (visitation), and tutoring general population offenders in reading and GED preparation. We are already seeing God bless as some of the 'worst of the worst' have professed faith in Christ and begun to grow in sanctification."

**Dr. Benjamin Phillips, Director of the SWBTS Darrington Extension**



"**CLAY Student Leadership** has impacted more than 10,000 students and parents in Texas public schools during 2014-2015. The CLAY Leadership program teaches Bible-based leadership values that transform lives, and gives students purpose and self-worth. CLAY is a curriculum taught during the school day which targets every student in the school."

**Abel Lopez, President & CEO**



"**Generation One** was able to hire additional men from the community to work at the screen printing shop, hire additional ladies to work in our sewing and embroidery businesses, and add much needed staff to our Generation One Academy that allowed us to take in more kids!"

**Mike Malkemes, President**



"**Mission Centers of Houston** was able to provide food to over 23,000 people, deliver food to over 1,000 homebound senior adults, lead after-school programs and Bible studies with over 200 children and youth each week, teach ESL to 30 women and see 68 people come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior!"

**Ginger Smith, Executive Director**



"**Village of Hope** is on our way to paying off our property; our staff received further training; we had many items built by your wonderful Deacons' team; and we were able to build a workshop for our construction crew. The young men who reside at Village of Hope who have an interest in construction and can now work alongside their housefather to learn and to bond. We couldn't do it without you!"

**Todd Block, Director**

"**His Cherished Ones** was enabled to better serve and share love with our community. By helping to meet our financial needs, we are able to focus on the needs of our ministry by encouraging families, strengthening families, and placing orphaned and abandoned babies in families."

**Trena Ivy, Founder**

